

STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

USDA's MyPyramid symbolizes a personalized approach to healthy eating and physical activity. It reminds individuals two years of age and older to make healthy food choices and to be active every day. The different parts of the MyPyramid symbol are described below.

Activity
Activity is represented by the steps and the person climbing them, as a reminder of the importance of daily physical activity.

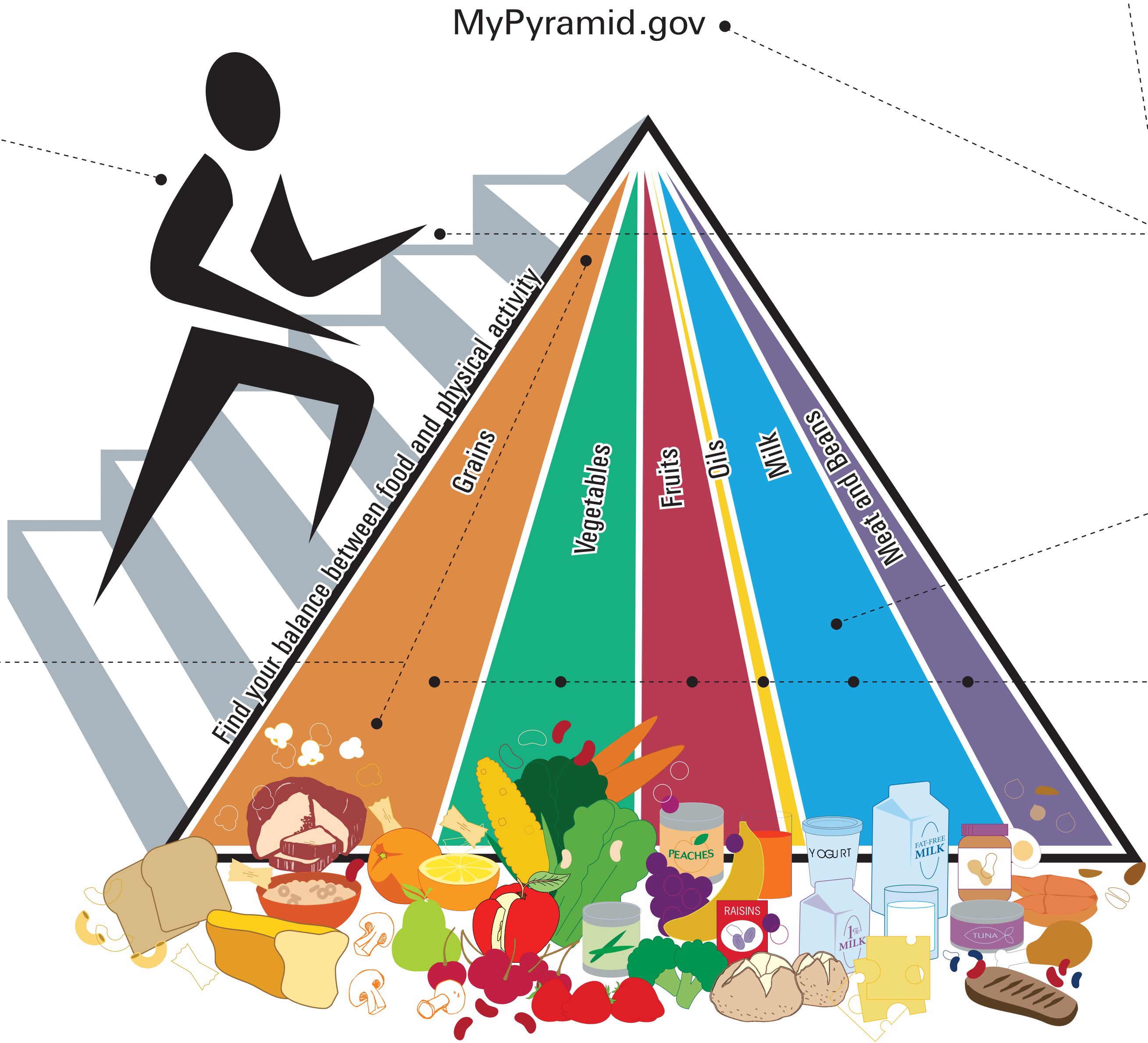
Be physically active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.

You may need 60 minutes of physical activity to prevent weight gain.

60-90 minutes of physical activity may be needed for weight loss.

Children and teenagers should be physically active for at least 60 minutes everyday, or most days.

Moderation
Moderation is represented by the narrowing of each food group from bottom to top. The wider base stands for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. These should be selected more often. The narrower top area stands for foods containing more added sugars and solid fats. The more active you are, the more of these foods can fit into your diet.



Gradual Improvement
Gradual Improvement is encouraged by the slogan. It suggests that individuals can benefit from taking small steps to improve their diet and lifestyle each day.

Personalization
Personalization is shown by the person on the steps, the slogan, and the URL. Find the kinds and amounts of food to eat each day at MyPyramid.gov.

Proportionality
Proportionality is shown by the different widths of the food group bands. The widths suggest how much food a person should choose from each group. The widths are just a general guide, not exact proportions.

Variety
Variety is symbolized by the 6 color bands representing the 5 food groups of the Pyramid and oils. This illustrates that foods from all groups are needed each day for good health.

GRAINS Make half your grains whole	VEGETABLES Vary your veggies	FRUITS Focus on fruits	OILS Know your fats	MILK Get your calcium-rich foods	MEAT & BEANS Go lean with protein
Eat at least 3 oz. of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day.	Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as part of the vegetable group.	Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group.	Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.	Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, and other milk products.	Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry.
Examples of whole grains, include whole wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice.	Eat more dark-green veggies like broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens.	Eat a variety of fruit.	Limit solid fats like butter, margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these.	Include milk as a beverage at meals.	Bake it, broil it, or grill it.
In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 oz. equivalent from the grains group.	Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes.	Choose fresh, frozen, canned (in 100% fruit juice or water), or dried fruit.	Check the Nutrition Facts label to keep saturated fats, and trans fats low.	If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources such as fortified foods and beverages.	Vary your protein routine – choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
	Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils.	Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit, for the benefits dietary fiber provides.		Alternate calcium choices include calcium fortified juices, cereals, breads, soy or rice beverages, canned fish (sardines, salmon with bones) and some leafy greens (collard and turnip greens, kale, bok choy).	In general, 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry or fish, 1 egg, 1 Tbsp of peanut butter, ¼ cup of cooked dry beans, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the meat and beans group.
		Go easy on fruit juices.			

Food Intake Patterns*

The suggested amounts of food to consume from the basic food groups, subgroups, and oils to meet recommended nutrient intakes at 12 different calorie levels. Nutrient and energy contributions from each group are calculated according to the nutrient-dense forms of foods in each group (e.g., lean meats and fat-free milk). The table also shows the discretionary calorie allowance that can be accommodated within each calorie level, in addition to the suggested amounts of nutrient-dense forms of foods in each group.

Daily Amount of Food From Each Group - Stay within your daily calorie needs.												
Calorie Level**	1,000	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,400	2,600	2,800	3,000	3,200
Grains	3 oz-eq***	4 oz-eq***	5 oz-eq***	5 oz-eq***	6 oz-eq***	6 oz-eq***	7 oz-eq***	8 oz-eq***	9 oz-eq***	10 oz-eq***	10 oz-eq***	10 oz-eq***
Vegetables	1 cup	1.5 cups	1.5 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3.5 cups	3.5 cups	4 cups	4 cups
Fruits	1 cup	1 cup	1.5 cups	1.5 cups	1.5 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups
Oils	3 tsp	4 tsp	4 tsp	5 tsp	5 tsp	6 tsp	6 tsp	7 tsp	8 tsp	8 tsp	10 tsp	11 tsp
Milk	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups
Meat and Beans	2 oz-eq***	3 oz-eq***	4 oz-eq***	5 oz-eq***	5 oz-eq***	5.5 oz-eq***	6 oz-eq***	6.5 oz-eq***	6.5 oz-eq***	7 oz-eq***	7 oz-eq***	7 oz-eq***
Discretionary**** calorie allowance (extras - solid fats and sugars)	165	170	170	130	195	265	290	360	410	425	510	650

* Calorie requirements usually double during training that is physically demanding, like during a deployment.

** Your recommended calorie level is determined by your age, gender (male or female) and activity level. To find out the best calorie level for you, go to www.mypyramid.gov

*** Ounce - equivalent: in the grains food group, the amount of food counted as equal to a 1-ounce slice of bread. In the Meat and Beans group, the amount of food counted as equal to one ounce of meat, poultry, or fish.

**** Discretionary calorie allowance: The balance of calories remaining after accounting for the number of calories needed to meet recommended nutrient intakes through consumption of foods in low-fat or no added sugar forms.